

Why Betrayal?

Betrayal:

1. To give aid or information to an enemy; commit treason against.
2. To be false or disloyal.

The words Betray or Betrayal occur 74 times in the New Testament.

72 of those are in reference to Judas Iscariot.

Michael Card wrote:

Why did it have to be a friend Who chose to betray the Lord?

And why did he use a kiss to show them?

That's not what a kiss is for.

Only a friend can betray a friend; a stranger has nothing to gain.

And only a friend comes close enough to ever cause so much pain.

The pain of this betrayal is memorialized every time we share the Lord's Supper!

The Words of Institution begin:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed...

Yes, the betrayal of Jesus was a big deal!

Today we're looking for the answers to 2 questions:

1. Why did Jesus have to be betrayed and
2. What does that have to do with us?

The answer to the 1st one is quite straightforward.

Hebrews 4:14–16

Why Betrayal?

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,

but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,

that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need

We may suffer all kinds of betrayals throughout our life. A betrayal involves broken trust and so is especially painful.

It is unlikely, but certainly possible that we could go through a lifetime without being betrayed!

Without being betrayed by others that is!

It is not possible for us to never betray ourselves.

Paul talks about this in Romans 7.

For I do not understand my own actions.

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Because we are all sinners, we will betray God and ourselves by not doing what the Spirit of God within us is leading us to do.

Since Jesus had to be tempted in every respect just like us, it was necessary for him to be betrayed by a friend since he could not betray himself!

Why Betrayal?

Which leads us to the 2nd question:

What does betrayal have to do with us?

***1st – since we all betray ourselves by sinning
we need to recognize our continual need for
God’s mercy and forgiveness earned and given by Christ.***

***2nd – we need to be ready to forgive those who betray us
just as God has forgiven us.***

Matthew 18:21–22

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him,

“I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

3rd – we need to identify with Judas.

Among the apostles, the one success was Judas, and the one thoroughly groveling failure was Peter.

Judas was a success in the ways that most impress:

- He made a deal that made him a small fortune.
- And that deal aligned him with those in positions of power and political authority.

Peter was a failure in ways that we most dread:

- He was impotent in a crisis and socially inept.

Why Betrayal?

- At the arrest of Jesus, he collapsed, a hapless, blustering coward!
- In the most critical situations of his life with Jesus, the confession on the road to Caesarea Philippi and the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration, he said the most embarrassingly inappropriate things.

Time, of course, has reversed our judgments on the two men.

- Judas is now a byword for betrayal, and Peter is one of the most honored names in the church and in the world.
- Judas is a villain; Peter is a saint.

Yet the world continues to chase after the successes of Judas, financial wealth and political power, and to defend itself against the failures of Peter, cowardice and ineptness.

So, if we identify with Judas we can throw ourselves on the mercy of God.

Matthew 26:21–22

And as they were eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another,

“Is it I, Lord?”

Yes Lord, I admit that I have betrayed you and fall at your feet to receive your mercy.

And then, in the power of the Spirit given to us we can be more like Peter, after he was restored.

Kari Myers wrote this: “Being good when you feel bad,”

Why Betrayal?

Sickness, stress and sleep deprivation are three things that can really do a number on a person's disposition. Don't ask me how I know this. I just do. Maybe you know it, too.

It is hard to be good when we don't feel good.

- When we feel bad, physically or emotionally, we tend not to handle things as well as we would on a good day.
- Bad days can tempt us to focus inward.
- If they persist we can fall into self-pity or become obsessed with improving our situation.
- We can become self-absorbed, self-serving or just plain selfish.

But it does not have to be so. Jesus showed us another way.

- At the moment of his betrayal to an angry mob who would take him to a cruel death, he healed the servant of his enemy.
- On the worst of days, as he was unjustly arrested and threatened, he responded with compassion.
- In the midst of his own pain he took notice of and tended to the pain of another.

Jesus loved in good times and bad.

So, feeling bad is not an excuse.

It's a test.

Bad days are a test of character.

Why Betrayal?

They show how closely, or not so closely, we're following the example of Christ. They also build character. In his letter to the Romans Paul calls us not just to endure suffering, but to rejoice in it.

Romans 5:3-4

suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope!

There are 2 times in the New Testament when the word betrayal does not refer to Judas.

The 1st is used by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse; telling us of signs of the end of the age.

Matthew 24:7–10

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

The 2nd is part of Stephen's sermon just prior to being stoned to death.

Acts 7:51–53

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Why Betrayal?

And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One,

whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.

Betrayal is going to continue to be part of this fallen world we live in until Jesus comes again.

It was necessary for Jesus to endure all the depths of human pain in order that he might heal us. And what hurts more than betrayal?

It hurts so much because it hurts those we love.

It hurts so much because it destroys trust.

It hurts so much because it is so personal.

- When you are a child, being insulted by a bully hurts but not as much as when your friend does it.
- When you are in a relationship, nothing stings more than being cheated on.
- When you are a parent, nothing tears at the heart more than failing your children.

Being turned over to suffering and death at the hands of one of your chosen disciples had to tear Jesus' heart apart.

His response to this betrayal?

Judas, would you betray me with a kiss?

He gave him one last chance to change his mind. And when it became obvious that Judas would carry on, Jesus said to him,

Why Betrayal?

What you have come to do, do it quickly.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

What we learn from the betrayal of Jesus is:

- We need to forgive as we have been forgiven.
- We need to be good even when we feel bad.
- We need to understand that the scars of betrayal can make us strong if we respond like our Lord.

There is a new song by *I Am They* that speaks of this. We'll sing this song during Communion; as we remember Jesus's death until he comes again.

Here are a few of the words:

Darkest water and deepest pain

I wouldn't trade it for anything

'Cause my brokenness brought me to you

And these wounds are a story you'll use

So, I'm thankful for the scars

'Cause without them I wouldn't know your heart

And I know they'll always tell of who you are

So forever I am thankful for the scars!